

December 8, 2015

**Superintendent of Public Instruction Steven R. Staples
on Reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)**

What does ESEA reauthorization mean for Virginia?

Staples: Virginia has operated its own state-level accountability system for more than two decades. And so, the opportunity of the federal government to transfer much of that responsibility back to the states is really a welcomed opportunity because it allows us to work more closely with individual schools to tailor our responses to meet their needs.

Will Virginia continue to hold schools accountable for student success?

Staples: I think Virginia is well positioned to in fact continue to hold schools accountable for high expectations. We've been doing it for twenty years. And so, now the notion is we can control how we do that, not a matter of will we do that.

What will change and what will stay the same?

Staples: I'd like to think that the action that Congress appears to be taking would allow the state to run a single accountability system instead of what now are competing systems at the federal and state level, and I think it's going to increase our ability to clearly communicate to communities and parents, "Here's where schools rank as far as accountability." We'll still look at data by subgroups to make sure that we don't see gaps in those areas, and we'll still as a state ask schools and school divisions to focus on narrowing those gaps.